

Amendment
U.S. Patent Application No. 10/776,178

REMARKS

Claims 1, 7-11 and 17-20 are pending in the subject application: claims 1, 5, 7-11, 15, and 17-20 stand rejected, claims 6 and 16 are indicated as containing allowable subject matter, and claims 2-4 and 12-14 are withdrawn as a result of a previous election of species requirement.

By the above amendments, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 5 and 6, and claim 11 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 15 and 16. Accordingly claims 5, 6, 15 and 16 have been canceled. Claims 2-4 and 12-14, which were the withdrawn claims, have also been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of the withdrawn and canceled claims in continuation and/or divisional applications. Favorable reconsideration of the application and allowance of all of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17, 18, and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,731,945 to Bertin in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,385,113 to Longwell. Claims 9 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,731,945 to Bertin in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,385,113 to Longwell and further in view of U.S. Patent Pub. 2003/0090879 A1 to Dobler.

The Examiner indicates that claims 6 and 16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their parent claims and any intervening claims. The Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to incorporate the limitations of dependent claims 5 and 6, and has also amended independent claim 11 to incorporate the limitations of dependent claims 15 and 16. The Examiner is requested to hold in abeyance the requirement of rewriting of claims 6 and 16 in independent form, until the Examiner has had an opportunity to reconsider (and withdraw) the rejection of parent claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a).

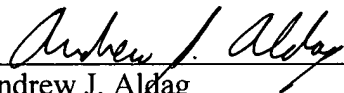
In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to find the application to be in condition for allowance with claims 1, 7-11 and 17-20. However, if for any

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reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney to discuss any unresolved issues and to expedite the disposition of the application.

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time that may be necessary to maintain the pendency of this application. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any additional fees required for the above-identified application or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 05-0460.

Respectfully submitted,



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